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Information and communication technologies for development

Report of the Second Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2008, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-third session the item entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

2. The Second Committee considered the item at its 16th, 24th and 30th meetings, on 23 October and 4 and 26 November 2008. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/63/SR.16, 24 and 30). Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 2nd to 6th meetings, from 6 to 8 October (see A/C.2/63/SR.2-6).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/63/72-E/2008/48);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the tenth United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (A/63/180).

4. At the 16th meeting, on 23 October, introductory statements were made by the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the Senior Public Information and Liaison Officer of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see A/C.2/63/SR.16).

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II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/63/L.10 and A/C.2/63/L.55

5. At the 24th meeting, on 4 November, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" (A/C.2/63/L.10), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

"*Recalling also* its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004 and 62/182 of 19 December 2007 and other relevant resolutions,

"*Recalling further* the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 20 October 2005,

"*Recalling* the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, as endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and endorsed by the General Assembly,

"*Recalling also* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

"*Recalling further* the outcome of the first and second meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens from 30 October to 2 November 2006 and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November 2007, respectively, and welcoming the convening of the third meeting of the Forum in Hyderabad, India, from 3 to 6 December 2008,

"*Welcoming*, in view of the existing gaps in information and communication technologies infrastructure across Africa, the launching in Kigali in October 2007 of Connect Africa, an initiative aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Recognizing* the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment, of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

"*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Welcoming* the activities carried out by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, as in the next intersessional meeting to be held in Santiago from 12 to 14 November 2008,

"*Stressing* that, for the majority of the poor, the developmental promise of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizing the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communication technologies, to bridge the digital divide,

"1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will effectively expedite the integration of all countries in a positive and fair way into the global economy;

"2. *Stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, making effective use of information and communication technologies, on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

"3. *Recognizes* the importance of access to information and knowledge to fostering local capacity development and innovation and promoting overall sustainable development;

"4. *Also recognizes* that information and communication technologies present new opportunities and challenges, and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon the developed countries to provide adequate financial resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries;

"5. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communication technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socio-economic activity, and calls for accelerating the work on the development-related mandate concerning the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights that would enable the fulfilment of this potential;

"6. *Stresses* the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of the new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all;

"7. *Recalls* the creation, within the context of the World Summit on the Information Society, of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, and in this regard invites voluntary contribution to its financing, in particular through its new financing mechanism, the '1 per cent digital solidarity principle';

"8. *Recognizes* the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders, and notes that developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, are lagging behind in their effective use of

information and communication technologies for national, social and economic development;

"9. *Also recognizes* that South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular cooperation, can be a useful tool to promote the development of information and communication technologies;

"10. *Stresses* the need for resources for information and communication technologies activities on a predictable, continuous and reliable basis to enable the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies to contribute effectively to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

"11. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in that regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communication technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

"12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2009, on the basis of his ongoing consultations with relevant international organizations, recommendations on how the process towards enhanced cooperation, as mandated by the World Summit on the Information Society in article 71 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, should be pursued;

"13. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, in the budget proposal for the biennium 2009-2010, to provide for regular funds to support the work of the secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum;

"14. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution."

6. At its 30th meeting, on 26 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution, circulated in English only, entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" (future A/C.2/63/L.55), submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Guyana), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.10.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.55 (see para. 11).

9. Following the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the Vice-Chairman (Guyana) (see A/C.2/63/SR.30).

10. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.55, draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.10 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

11. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Information and communication technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

Recalling also its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004 and 62/182 of 19 December 2007, Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/3 of 18 July 2008 and other relevant resolutions,

Noting that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting also that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[1] will further enrich the information society,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[2] as endorsed by the General Assembly,[3] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[4] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[5]

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[6]

Stressing the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all,

Recalling the first and second meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens from 30 October to 2 November 2006 and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November 2007, respectively, and welcoming the convening of the third meeting of the Forum in Hyderabad, India, from 3 to 6 December 2008,

Welcoming, in view of the existing gaps in information and communication technologies infrastructure across Africa, the launching in Kigali, in October 2007,

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[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October-3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum: *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

[2] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.

[3] See resolution 59/220.

[4] See A/60/687.

[5] See resolution 60/252.

[6] See resolution 60/1.

of Connect Africa, an initiative aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment, of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/8 of 25 July 2007, in which, inter alia, the Council requested various entities, including the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development, to submit reports to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implications of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,[7]

Noting the intersessional meeting of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, held in Santiago from 12 to 14 November 2008,

Stressing that, for the majority of the poor, the developmental promise of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizing the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communication technologies, to bridge the digital divide,

Recognizing the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, into the global economy;

2. *Stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, making effective use of information and communication technologies, on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

3. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communication technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and South-South cooperation;

[7] A/63/72-E/2008/48.

4. *Also recognizes* that information and communication technologies present new opportunities and challenges, and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer, on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

5. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communication technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socio-economic activity;

6. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to the new technologies, especially information and communication technologies for development;

7. *Recalls* the improvements and innovations in financial mechanisms, including the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Geneva Declaration of Principles,[2] and, in this regard, invites voluntary contributions to its financing;

8. *Recognizes* that South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular cooperation, can be a useful tool to promote the development of information and communication technologies;

9. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva[2] and Tunis[4] phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communication technologies sector;

10. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the need for resources in this regard;

11. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in that regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communication technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2009, on the basis of his consultations with all relevant organizations, including international organizations, a report which may contain recommendations on how the process towards enhanced cooperation should be pursued;

13. *Invites* Member States to support the meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries in the preparatory meetings of the Internet Governance Forum and in the Forum itself in 2009 and 2010, and to consider contributing to the multi-stakeholder trust fund created for the Forum, as appropriate;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution.